

Chairman Garfield, Vice Chairmen Moore and Espinoza and committee members,

My name is Bill Dobbie and I come to you today as Legislative Director of the Commanders Group of Veterans Organizations in Michigan. As you know, the Commanders Group represents the Commanders and membership of all federal chartered veteran service organizations within the State of Michigan.

We have reviewed the Governor's proposed D.M.V.A. budget for 2006. We find, keeping in mind the current budget picture, in most respects, that the budget meets our requirements and desires.

We do have some serious reservations regarding funding to our State Veteran's Homes in Grand Rapids and Marquette. In review of the President's proposed D.V.A. spending for FY 2006, we of the chartered Veteran Service Organizations, in the Independent Budget submitted to Congress, find proposed federal spending for D.V.A. to be about 3.5 Billion Dollars short of projected needs. Part of this shortfall is in federal support for long term care for our wartime veterans. This is expected to reduce federal funding to our State Veteran's Homes by nearly 5 Million Dollars. We would ask this committee to join our organizations in contacting the appropriate committees and our Michigan Delegation in the House and Senate in Washington DC and pressing for additional funds for our Veteran's Homes. The alternative to increased federal funding can only be vastly increased State Funding, which will meet budget pressures, or drastic cuts in services to our veterans, which will meet opposition from our group and the veteran population in Michigan. I hope that you will agree that, in this time of war, it would unwise to have such severe cuts to veterans service programs in the state. I assure you that we will do our part in securing additional federal funding.

As always, we appreciate the efforts of this committee in assuring that Michigan provides the best possible place of residence and the finest service climate for our veterans and those new veterans that are returning from current service.

Attached, you will find a list of the 05-06 Legislative Goals approved by the Commanders Group and submitted for your consideration.

I thank all of you for your attention and am free for your questions.

Submitted by:

William A. Dobbie

for: The Commanders Group of Veterans Organizations in Michigan

**LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY GOALS
OF
THE COMMANDERS GROUP
OF
VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS
IN
MICHIGAN
2005-06**

Increase support for Michigan's Veterans Homes in Grand Rapids and Marquette.

Seek alternative funding for Tuition Grant Program.

Seek funding for Veterans Service Organizations at current levels.

Work for creation of new Veterans Home in South Eastern Michigan.

Submitted by:

Bill Dobbie
Legislative Director
The Commanders Group
Phone 586-322-3304
Fax 586-739-0420
e-mail wadobbie@prodigy.net